# THE LUCKY ONE TALKS ABOUT "RUDY"

**Mrs. Valentino Explains to a Curious World How She Happened to Marry the "Great Lover of the Silver Sheet."**


MRS. VALENTINO

"WHETHER to call myself Winifred Hudnut or Natacha Rambova or Mrs. Rodolph Valentino I don't know," says Rodolph's wife in an interview in the December issue of the Photoplay Magazine. "Natacha Rambovo seems to belong most to me, the individual I think I am, but, of course, I wasn't born that way. When I went into the Russian Ballet, though, I had to have a Russian name. That way just after my course at art school in Paris, and I was seventeen, and I have been using that name ever since. I speak Russian and all that is Russian appeals to me, and, moreover, that is what Rudy calls me."

Her eyes soften when she speaks of him, and yet she refuses to be romantic about it.

"It wasn't love at first sight," she says. "I think it was good comradeship more than anything else. We were both very lonely, but we had known each other more than six months before we became at all interested in each other. I was working for Nazimova and Rudy was working on 'The Four Horsemen.' I saw him occasionally and felt a bit sorry for him, because he seemed always to be apart by himself.

"You don't know Rudy when he works. He sees nothing and thinks nothing and does nothing but live the character he is portraying. As the first of his work in the 'Four Horsemen' was finished and the officials saw it, his name began to mean something. They began to talk about him and tell weird stories about his fascination for women and perhaps that was what piqued my interest. What I couldn't figure out was, how any one could be the villainous person he was reputed to be and yet be home in a tiny room every night by about 9 o'clock and on the lot each morning all ready for work before anyone else had even arrived. Still, I never really talked to him until we began to work on 'Camille.' Then his work began to interest me. There is really nothing sophisticated or seductive about Rudy, whatsoever. It's like my drawings. I am perfectly willing to admit that they are morbid, yet I am the most prosaic of human beings.

"Now Rudy has a personality that comes out on the screen which is entirely different from the Rudy I know. Yet I believe it is part of him as the exotic quality in my sketches is part of me. But basically he is just a little boy. Things hurt him as they would hurt a child and he is quite as emotional. Also he is just as spontaneous and trustful. Yet with all that there is a remarkable matter-of-factness about him and sincerity. He is the most sincere person I have ever known."

Natacha was trying very hard to be coldly analytical about this young lover of hers, but she wasn't succeeding very well. Every time she spoke of him the color rose in her white cheeks delightfully.

"When we did discover we were in love," she confessed, "we had it all planned that we would wait a year until Rudy's divorce was final. But I knew nothing about divorces and neither did he. They are so different everywhere and we really thought he was divorced and that he had received his decree or whatever it was, and thought it was only some State law that kept us from marrying. So on May 14, 1922, we went down to Palm Springs on a party. It was fearfully respectable. Everyone we knew was there and we had no thought of being married at that time.

"But someone, I don't remember who, suggested that we go over to Mexico and be married. Several couples we knew had done the same thing before under similar circumstances but we had to be the ones who did it once too often. If Rudy hadn't been Rudy they wouldn't have jumped on us. Fame is like a giant x-ray. Once you are exposed beneath it the very beatings of your heart are shown to a gaping world.

"I'll confess it is rather fun being courted by your own husband. We go out for dinner and the theater together nearly every evening and then he brings me back to my hotel and down in the lobby he bows formally over my hand and I, equally proper, bid him good-night and stand to watch him until he disappears out of sight on his way back to his hotel."

# "When Knighthood Was In Flower"

ONE of the most beautiful scenes in "When Knighthood Was in Flower," the Cosmopolitan Production starring Marion Davies, which left Loew's Columbia yesterday, after a notable run, and which has established a record for the wonderful artistry of its settings, is the garden party at the Court of old King Louis XII of France. Marion Davies, who, as Princess Mary Tudor, becomes the bride of the aged French monarch, insists on playing blind man's buff. King Louis, portrayed by William Norris, tries his best to assume the sprightly airs of youth. Robert G. Vignola directed the picture.

# MR. GRIFFITH IN REMINISCENT MOOD

**The Wizard Talks About the Old Days and How Doug Fairbanks Was a Soda Jerker in His First Movie Part.**

"EVERY time I appear I have a brand-new star tucked under my arm, other lures grab them and I must set about cultivating another crop."

D. W. Griffith, the producer of the motion picture de luxe, cast a fond fatherly eye upon his latest protegee, the fair young Carol Dempster, who had just descended with him from the New York Central train in Chicago.


D. W. GRIFFITH

"No, it's not that my affections wander,—I'd like to keep them all with me. But it's my job just to make them famous, and after that I'd have to be John D. Rockefeller to keep them on my payroll."

Mr. Griffith and Miss Dempster are in Chicago for the premiere of their joint triumph, "One Exciting Night," in which the slender Carol stars.

"I pick them out of the crowd and I introduce them to the world—the little Gish girls and Mary Pickford, Mae Marsh, Mildred Harris, Bessie Love and a legion of others. Even Doug, the irresistible Valentino and Richard Barthelmess were on my payroll. The world falls in love with them and then off they go and leave me, perhaps to produce their own pictures and make far more money than I do!

"Listen," said the director of scores of million-dollar stars: "I can remember when Richard Barthelmess and Rodolph Valentino fought over a part in one of my pictures, for which I paid $7 a day. And now they'd both turn up their noses at $1,000 a week. I can remember when Douglas jerked soda for his star act in my show. Seven years ago I produced a picture that had in it all these people whose names I've mentioned, and I figure I couldn't touch that cast under $100,000 a week.

"So I always have to be on the lookout for new ones—though it sometimes happens that they're glad enough to come back to 'father' again."

## Screen Biographies

**No. 2—Wanda Hawley.**

WANDA HAWLEW was born in Scranton, Pa., July 30, 1897. At seventeen Miss Hawley entered Washington State University and took the arts course.

After leaving the university she went to New York to study voice culture, but a chronic irritation of her throat forbid her singing any longer. Then she turned to the silent drama.


WANDA HAWLEY

She made her screen debut with Fox pictures, and after playing with that company in leading roles for eight months she joined the Lasky studio and played the leading woman for Douglas Fairbanks in "Mr. Fix-It." So excellent was her work in that product that she was given the leading feminine roles in a list of productions featuring such popular male stars as William S. Hart, Charles Ray, Bryant Washburn and Wallace Reid. Cecil B. DeMille cast her in his productions, "Old Wives for New" and "For Better for Worse," and she was also a prominent member of his all-star cast in "The Affairs of Anatol."

Wanda Hawley is happily married to Burton Hawley, and they live in Hollywood, Cal. She is five feet three inches in height and weighs 110 pounds. Her hair is blonde and her eyes a soft grayish blue.

## Semon on His Own.

LARRY SEMON has stated to representaitves of the press that on the completion of his present contract with Vitagraph, he will build a studio in Hollywood and produce under his own banner. Eastern and Los Angeles capital will finance his project, he stated further. To date he has finished four of the ten comedies which his present contract calls for. It is openly reported that affairs between Semon and Vitagraph are not running smoothly again, despite the adjustment of their difficulties some time ago.

# TOO MUCH OBSCENITY IN MODERN PLAYS, OBSERVES ALAN DALE

By ALAN DALE.

"LET'S play at saying bad words," used to be a somewhat popular game with naughty little boys. One would utter some particularly unparliamentary interjection, discovered perchance in the gutter, and another would murmur some juvenile obscenity that happened to offer opportunities for shock. This would continue until the youths were rescued by indignant relatives.

The present trend of plays reminds me of that cute little game. Situations are scarce, stories are difficult to find, and new characters are not to be had for the asking, but "cuss" words are numerous. They change in fashion and style and significance very frequently and can invariably be relied upon to afford "shock" to those who like it.

"Let's play at writing bad words" is the adult form of the entertainment we used to savor in our young days. The drama offers fine opportunities for obscenity of language, and that this sort of thing succeeds is certain. Words that one never hears on the stage are used with impunity. Phrases that the reviewer can only indicate by dashes are hurled by one character at another, and the audience goes home delighted with the game of "writing bad words." It seems to be very fascinating and shudder'y, and—really in these days of overdone drama it is a neat way out of the difficulty. One can always listen to the garbage speech of the slums and the streets in general, improve upon it slightly and—then dramatize it.

The play at Maxine Elliott's Theater entitled "Rain" is a game of "writing bad words" and getting them spoken by an actress who has always been associated with a certain refinement of diction. This, of course, makes the game all the more thrilling. Cuss words spoken by those who look as though they would come "natural" would not be very stimulating. But uttered by a woman who suggests something far different they titillate. You all remember Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" and the "sensation" Mrs. Patrick Campbell made when she uttered the English expression "bloody."

This one word made the play. People used to go two or three times to see "Pygmalion" just to hear Mrs. Campbell speak the word that one usually listens to when exclaimed by the eloquent London "cabby." Had the expression been used by some cockney characters nobody would have paid the slightest attention to it, but spoken by Mrs. Patrick Campbell it was highly significant.

In "Rain" Jeanne Eagels, as a lady of speckled virtue, has various scenes with a minister of the gospel and it is he to whom she turns in her moments of indignation with torrents of invective and gutter slang.

At the close of one act, when the Rev. Alfred Davison has complained to the governor of Tutuila Island, in the South Seas, and asked that the scarlet woman be deported, she assails him with her vocabulary of obscenity. Words that the critic could merely intimate were hurled at the minister. Expressions that one would hesitate to read aloud were spoken with a vehemence—and this kind of "sensation" was what "Rain" had to rely upon exclusively.

It seems easy. Of course, it is easy. One can always "play at writing bad words" if they be needed, and the supply is ever greater than the demand. Bad words are always with us.

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IT was this same insistence upon the dictionary of the gutter that made the success of "The Hairy Ape." The upholders of Eugene O'Neill will, of course, assert that the play was just one other addition to the art gallery of Mr. O'Neill. I declare that the success of the piece was its "language." This shocked people. People like to be shocked. The bedroom farce and the play of equivocal situations can no longer supply the needed stimulus. This incentive is offered by the obscenity of speech—something that is comparatively new to the stage of today. It is the excuse for a sort of anemic thrill. We all know that people love to see on the stage things that they would pass by unnoticed in real life.

As Zangwill once observed, people will flock to the theater to view things in their wrong place. They will patronize a melodrama written around a steam engine because a steam engine is in the wrong place on the stage. They will rave over a train in a play, though in real life they wouldn't cross the street to see a dozen of 'em. An ocean steamer in a drama will attract a lot of attention and perchance "draw crowds." People could see an ocean steamer for nothing by just going down to the steamship piers. But they prefer it on the stage—because it doesn't belong there.

And so it is with gutter slang. One can hear it everywhere—in the subway, on the elevated, in crowds, in slums, in side streets and in cross streets, and it rather jars. Little boys love it. In some thoroughfares every word uttered by the street gamin is a "cuss word." Who bothers about it? There is no crowd to listen to the outbursts of vehement language. It doesn't even suggest a passing thrill. But on the stage—where assuredly it does not belong—it fascinates. It is relied upon by astute managers to supply the place of a good story and of pungent situations, and it does not fail. It is the climax of the dramatic scene at the close of the second act of "Rain" at Maxine Elliott's Theater.

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THE stimulus that this sort of thing offers to the public is psychopathological. The satisfaction of listening to a pretty girl speaking the words of the gutter in a frenzy of rage is morbid. There is nothing agreeable about it. It appeals to no fine sentiment. It even fails to appeal to one's sense of drama. It is makeshift drama. The one word "h—l" used to be regarded as extremely dangerous. A play produced years ago in which the heroine used this phrase was considered as eminently shocking. Today the interjection has passed into vaudeville and musical comedy. It is no longer used to supply thrills but to induce laughter. And it always does induce laughter. I have listened to dialogue in which wit passed perfectly unrecognized without the ghost of a laugh. But no sooner did the comedian exclaim "H—l!" than the house rocked with laughter.

Isn't it funny? We think we have progressed from the early days when we used to say "Let's play at saying bad words," but we haven't. We are precisely where we were in that respect. We play the game, and we play it until we are rescued from it by adult well-wishers. As a matter of fact, the stage is surely not justified in using language that the newspapers could not print. There is really little of value to be gained by garbage speech. It is realistic, of course, but such realism means so little! Should the idea be pushed to a finish the stage will come once more into disrepute. Censors who are busy deleting silly sex matters—the only poisonous things of which they wot—might justifiably turn their attention to the speech in which certain plays are couched.

I have written so often of the abuse of profanity that it is not necessary to go into that today, but while the censors are at it it might be advisable to eliminate even that—to cut out all obnoxious reference to the Deity and to make the stage safe for people of fastidious tendency. I quite agree that plays should not be written for "babes and sucklings." Why should they be? But the adult mind can acquire no particular thrill by listening to profligacy of speech. Besides, if you look at it calmly, it is so silly. "Let's play at saying bad words." It is little more than that. And we have grown up. We have left behind us the days when the "bad word" was the ultimate joy of wickedness. Why should we return to the era of juvenility just to help out playwrights whose minds refuse to function and who are forced to rely upon such simplicity of work?

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MUSIC and song cannot kill a really amusing play. They cannot convert it into one of those nondescript affairs called loosely musical comedies. They are usually busy covering up the defects of a story, or bringing down the "highbrow" to the requisite low-brow level. Music and song are the pills that the tired drama is asked to take when it is a bit run down and exhausted. Frank Craven's delightful play, "Too Many Cooks," that ran some years ago and achieved considerable success here—though it was not equally felicitous when essayed abroad—was regarded as about done for, when lo! it was decided to dose it up with "music," drug it with song and ply it with hypodermic injection of girl.

This treatment might have ruined it, as it has ruined many a good play. If "Too Many Cooks" hadn't been essentially strong and healthy it could never have survived this drastic manipulation. But it has survived it! It may now be seen at the Playhouse under the title of "Up She Goes," filled with music and song and girls. The builders of the little house in the play all sing. The hero, whose house it is, sings and dances. The heroine who, in the original, was so cutely ingenious, now figures as a dancer who arouses our enthusiasm by her dancing.

At first I was inclined to resent all this. It seemed so ruthless and unnecessary. Why can't a nice old play die gracefully without being "restored" to a semblance of life for the people who clamor for musical comedy? This is what I asked myself. The answer, of course, was to be found at the Playhouse, where it was impossible to disguise the fact that in its new dress "Too Many Cooks" was still funny and entertaining and that its humor had not been destroyed by the "musical comedy" treatment. "Up She Goes" is really a very enlivening and diverting entertainment, and the Craven mirth still abounds and has not been murdered by the "first aid" called in. The music is light and droll, and no harm is done. "Too Many Cooks" may still enjoy some more life, and perhaps it is just as well that it should.